

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An implant plate assembly for stabilization of the spine, comprising:
 - a first screw receiving socket element at a distal end of said assembly and configured with a screw shank passage and a screw head seat for attachment to a vertebra with the aid of a bone fixation screw;
 - an elongate arm extending proximally from said first socket element and having an elongate through slot therealong, said slot having edges, and a series of adjacent screw head seat depressions for selectively seating portions of the head of a bone fixation screw;
 - a second screw receiving socket element also configured with a screw shank passage and a screw head seat, and slidably received over said arm with its passage aligned over said slot for receiving the shank of a fixation screw therethrough for attachment to a vertebra;
 - said second socket element and said slot configured and dimensioned whereby portions of a screw head of a fixation screw seated in said second socket element protrude through said second socket element passage and engage edges of said slot for clamping said second socket element to said arm when said screw is fully secured in a vertebra.
2. Cancelled
3. (Currently Amended) The implant plate assembly of claim 1, further comprising a cap buttress nut threadably received in said second socket element over said screw head for engaging ~~and covering~~ said screw head.
4. (Currently Amended) The implant plate assembly of claim 3, said nut having bottom protuberances for engaging said screw head ~~as a lock~~.
5. (Previously Presented) An implant for stabilization of the spine, comprising:
 - an elongate implant plate assembly having distal and proximal ends configured for respective attachment to first and second spaced vertebra with the aid of bone fixation screws;

said plate assembly including first and second screw receiving elements slidably received with respect to each other for adjustably changing the distance between said elements;

a lock assembly for selectively locking said first and second elements from further relative movement therebetween; and

said first and second screw receiving elements each having a screw head socket bowl for receiving the head of a bone fixation screw with mating intimacy and a passage in the bottom of each bowl for passage of the shank of a bone fixation screw;

said second screw receiving element slidable along an arm portion of said plate assembly, said lock assembly including a slot in said arm portion underlying said passage for said second bowl for receiving the shank of a fixation screw therethrough and therealong at desired positions, and said passage for said second bowl and said slot configured and dimensioned whereby portions of the head of a fixation screw received in said second bowl protrude through said passage for said second bowl to engage edges of said slot and thereby clamp said second screw receiving element to said plate assembly when said fixation screw is fully secured to a vertebra;

wherein said distal end of said elongate implant plate has an open ended guide wire capture slot which communicates with said first bowl passage.

6. Cancelled

7. (Previously Presented) The implant of claim 5, including locking caps configured and dimensioned for closing off said bowls with bone fixation screw heads seated in said bowls.

8. (Previously Presented) The implant of claim 7, said locking caps threadably received in said bowls and having bottom protuberances for engaging said screw heads ~~as a lock~~.

9. (Previously Presented) The implant of claim 5, wherein said distal end has a leading transverse edge which is tapered.

10. (Previously Presented) The implant of claim 5, wherein said plate assembly is longitudinally curved to mate a specific lordotic curve.

11. (Previously Presented) The implant of claim 5, wherein said slot is dimensioned and contoured for seating portions of the head of a bone fixation screw protruding from said second bowl.
12. (Currently Amended) The implant of claim 11, wherein edges of said slot ~~including~~ include an aligned series of adjacent screw head seat depressions for selectively seating portions of the head of a bone fixation screw at different positions along said slot.
- 13 - 38. Cancelled